

EXHIBIT A

Arduino future and Tinker.it

3 messages

Massimo Banzi [REDACTED]
To: team@arduino.cc

Mon, Jan 29, 2007 at 8:03 PM

Dear Friends

I'm writing because 2007 has begun and we are in need to discuss where we want to go with arduino.

On our side me and gianluca, being the ones who deal with the hardware and trying to make a living out of our own consulting work have been thinking about a reorganisation of our activities.

I think Arduino is now becoming a mature product quite stable and well understood... We are launching the bluetooth board and more stuff could come but we haven't had any strategic talking since september at least..

We need to open a discussion on where we want to take arduino to and who is going to contribute what to the project.

I've had the UK accountant on hold for a while waiting for some discussion that hasn't happened... I think arduino has accomplished its initial tasks and need a new plan for the next few years to stay interesting.

I hope we can start now.

Having said this... this is how we plan to reorganise our operations in Italy:

Say welcome to tinker.it!

We have used this brand name since early 2006 for the projects we have done for Salone del mobile 2006 because it was a way to avoid using only my name on the credits for the exhibitions.

Now I have been working for a bit on a couple of concepts that I would like to fully develop into a company

the current definition is : "Tinker.it makes products and platforms to help designers and artists make the best use of digital technologies. We cover the whole space of the design/artistic process by providing early consultancy during the concept phase down to the implementation."

I might need to rework that but the idea is to continue making tools and provide consultancy to designers and companies about technology.

We will

- * consult companies and do projects dealing with technology
- * build products that can be used to build exhibitions , installations and the like.
- * build a prototyping toolkit which is somehow similar to a number of sensor systems out there but with a twist (it's a bit like phidgets but we are making a very easy to use visual programming language based on flash)
- * make the toolkit be the base to providing a constant selection of all the available technologies... a bit like material connexion.. a library of experiences
- * have products for sale online, a bit like sparkfun
- * take on the pcb-europe.net website and its operation, separating the PCB selling from the tools selling.
- * showcase the arduino boards as an example of our engineering and small scale production capability

I've been talking to venture capital people here in Italy and I'm trying to make this into a profitable company

If you guys want to be partners you're more than welcome.

i'll send out a more detailed report soon but this is the short and quick version

let me know your thoughts

massimo

Tom Igoe [REDACTED]
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Mon, Jan 29, 2007 at 8:24 PM

Thanks for bringing this up. A few things off the top of my head:

1. Can Arduino follow the linux model? i.e. it's still open source, anyone can make them, but everyone buys from the vendor who offers the reliable build and good service. In our case, that would mean that we license anyone who pays to use the name, but we figure out how to make Smart Projects, or tinker.it into the Red Hat of Arduino.
2. Since we've already published the project under GNU, we can't retract it, right? Also, we'd generate huge bad will if we did. Our main control is in licensing, as I see it. We need a good licensing model. That should fund the Arduino Enterprise.
3. Besides selling the boards, what makes money, and what needs money? Based on those two, we can work out how to distribute money. For example: writing the core software needs money. We should look for ways to fund that besides licensing.
4. Where is everyone physically these days? David C in Malmo, Massimo and Gianluca in Milan, me in New York, David M still in Copenhagen? I ask because I might be in Copenhagen in the end of March/beginning of April. Anyone got time for a meeting, or at least a conference call when we're in a compatible timezone?

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David A. Mellis [REDACTED]
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Cc: Massimo Banzi [REDACTED] team@arduino.cc

Mon, Jan 29, 2007 at 10:07 PM

I'd like us to establish the Arduino company, trademark the name, work out licensing conditions for people looking to distribute Arduino, manufacture it, or produce compatible, Arduino-branded hardware, and start making some deals (esp. with the other folks interested in distributing Arduino). This might be a lot of work, but I think it's

better than leaving things as unclarified as they are now.

Can you let us know what the accountant needs from us? What are the decisions we need to make (e.g. how to divide shares, who's a director, what kind of projects can be done through the company and how, etc.)? I know we've discussed these things before, but I think it's time to find out exactly what the legal requirements are and sort it out.

That, in turn, should make it much easier to understand how Arduino and tinker.it work together (as I'd like to see them do).

Once we have a structure to work in I think it will be easier to talk about specific ideas for new directions for Arduino.

I'm sorry to be such a stickler about this, but I've put a lot of work into the project in the understanding that I was a partner in it, and so far there is nothing that confirms that understanding. I'm glad to be a part of Arduino and happy to continue working on it, but I think we need to make it clear (legally) where we stand.

P.S. I'm still in Copenhagen and would love to see you when you're here. We certainly have a lot of things to discuss as a group. Let me know.

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